

R E M A R K S

This is in response to the Office Action that was mailed on May 16, 2006. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter (including claims 6, 7, and 12-17) in this application. Claim 12 is rewritten in independent form. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the recitations of claims 4 and 6. Claims 4-7 are accordingly cancelled, without prejudice. Claim 8-11, 19, and 20 are likewise cancelled, without prejudice. No new matter is introduced by this Amendment. Entry of this Amendment – in order to place the application into condition for allowance or into better condition for appeal – is earnestly solicited. With this Amendment, claims 1, 2, and 12-18 are pending in the application.

Claims 18 and 19 were rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as failing to define the invention properly. Claim 19 is cancelled, and claim 18 is amended to obviate this rejection as stated by the Examiner.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 2003/0054288 A1 to Shimada et al. Claims 4, 5, 8, 9, and 20 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimada et al. in view of US 6,599,674 B1 to Kawamura et al. Claims 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimada et al. in view of US 4,365,018 to Crutchfield et al. Claim 19 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimada et al in view of Kawamura et al. and Crutchfield et al. The Examiner had kindly indicated that claims 6, 7, 12, 14, and 16 are allowable and that claims 13,

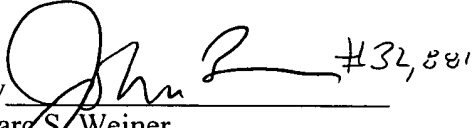
15, and 17 are allowed. Claim 18 was not rejected over the prior art. Accordingly, the present Amendment limits the claims herein to allowable subject matter. It is respectfully submitted that none of these prior art references – alone or in combination – teaches or renders obvious the presently claimed invention.

If there are any issues remaining, the Examiner is invited to telephone Richard Gallagher, Registration No. 28,781, at (703) 205-8008, in order to resolve them.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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